



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: February 17, 2015

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **City of Minneapolis Parklet Program**

Recommendation: Receive and File with Presentation

Department Information:

Prepared by: Mackenzie Turner Borgen, Pedestrian Planner, PW Traffic & Parking Services

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee:

Mackenzie Turner Borgen, Pedestrian Planner, PW Traffic & Parking Services
Lacy Shelby, Principal Urban Designer, CPED

Reviews

- Permanent Review Committee (PRC): N/A
- Civil Rights Approval N/A
- Policy Review Group (PRG): N/A

Financial Impact

- Action is within the approved budget.

Community Impact

- City Goals: Living Well; One Minneapolis; A Hub of Economic Activity; Great Places

Supporting Information

Pilot Parklet Program

A pilot parklet program was initially proposed in 2013 and included in the 2014 budget. The pilot's primary purpose was to demonstrate and encourage a broader parklet program. In fall 2014, the City of Minneapolis implemented the pilot program that ran from September 15 to October 31. The three pilot parklets saw an estimated 1,300 visitors during their six-week installation. Public Works will continue the pilot parklet program at three locations in 2015.

The Department of Public Works and Department of Community Planning and Economic Development are partnering once again to launch an application-based parklet program in

spring 2015. This program will encourage private investment in enhancing the public realm by creating a program and process through which eligible applicants may seek City approval to place a parklet in the public right of way.

Parklet Program

The Parklet Program grew out of the Public Realm Enhancement working group, a cross-divisional group that formed to explore how the City could increase efforts to support more comprehensive improvements to the public realm. It is part of a larger trajectory of work that is focused on encouraging private investment that serves the public interest in the public realm. Additionally, the City has leveraged the professional expertise and prior experience of staff in the Public Works and Community Planning and Economic Development departments to partner and develop a program to achieve these goals in a short period of time.

What is a Parklet?

Parklets are an innovative and cost effective way to add public gathering space to public streets. Parklets are intended as streetscape enhancements, providing an economical solution for increased public open space. Parklets provide amenities like seating, planting, bike parking, and public art. While parklets are typically funded and maintained by neighboring businesses, residents and community organizations, they are publicly accessible and open to all. Parklets are located in the parking lane adjacent to the curb designed as an extension of the sidewalk. Currently, advertising and other commercial activities are not permitted in the parklet.

Purpose

The program objective is to encourage pedestrian engagement with the urban environment by supporting positive streetscape activity through the creation of alternative public space. The program was designed to enable private stakeholders to use their private resources to fund and maintain approved enhancements in the public right of way, allowing businesses, associations and other groups with a stake in enhancing city streets opportunities to achieve local placemaking in an “open source” and creative way. The private resource model provides an innovative way to allow for individual creative expressions while advancing the City’s livability goals.

Program Goals

The goal of the parklet program is to make the City more livable, walkable, and beautiful. This program is a first step in a broader goal of the City to develop tools that enable the coordination of public and private entities toward the enhancement of the public realm and the public right of way. Parklets will be funded primarily through private resources, be custom designed insertions (providing a unique opportunity to artfully make a neighborhood or business brand legible), and contribute to livability by creating more public seating and gathering places.

Program Benefits

- Enhance the pedestrian experience of the public realm
- Transform underutilized street space into dynamic and usable public space
- Support local business communities by activating community corridors
- Foster community interaction and social engagement

Public Works and CPED will present the new program.

Attachment

City of Minneapolis Parklet Application Manual (DRAFT)